Free ScanSoft Software is Impermissible Gift

ScanSoft, Inc. has sent copies of free software to certain employees and Soldiers within the Department of the Army. The software, ScanSoft PDF Converter Professional, was mailed to Army personnel at their office addresses and sent to them in their official capacities. Accompanying this software was a letter from ScanSoft, Inc. asking the recipient to try the free software. Additionally, if the software is installed and activated prior to August 31, 2004, ScanSoft, Inc. will send a free copy of its speech recognition software, Dragon NaturallySpeaking Professional to the recipient. The speech recognition software is valued at \$695.00. Personnel are reminded of the prohibition on accepting gifts from entities that conduct business with the Department of Defense, such as ScanSoft, Inc. According to the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch and the DoD Joint Ethics Regulation, it is impermissible for an employee or Soldier to accept a gift from a prohibited source unless an exception allows for such acceptance. No such acceptance exists in this case that would allow employees or Soldiers, in their personal capacities, to accept these gift of software from ScanSoft, Inc. We advise employees and Soldiers that they are prohibited from retaining this free software for their personal use and they are in jeopardy of committing a violation of the Standards of Conduct and the JER should they retain these software packages for their personal use. As this software was sent to employees and Soldiers in their official capacities, the software must be either turned in to the agency or returned to ScanSoft, Inc. Those who have received the free software must contact their organization's designated ethics counselor immediately to determine the proper disposition of the software.